1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

361 tornadoes in the rainy season, is another ecological consideration.

591 [620] The hamlet is always a kinship unit, usually patrilocal and patrilineal. When a young man marries, his father will give him a cow or two, as he will to his daughter. But only the son will receive the use of part of his father's rented (or owned) fields to support his new family. Thus he will usually build his hut near his father's, father's brother's, and paternal grandfather's. In exceptional cases, when no land is available at his father's, the bridegroom may agree to establish himself at his wife's hamlet, but this is rare since the feeling is that he will always remain a subjugated, barely tolerated, henpecked and ill-treated figure. A proud Amhara male, even a "gabbar" (peasant ex-serf), would not agree to such a condition and insists on patriarchal status at least within his own biological family of creation. He would much rather continue [606] to obey his father than his new father-in-law. Consanguinal kinship feelings are so strong that it is a common assumption that no in-law could really mean well and be unselfishly well-disposed to the newcomer. Only when warfare has killed off the adult males in a hamlet, male inlaws move in.

592 Each hut is inhabited by a biological family, usually father and mother, about three children who have survived infant mortality, and perhaps an aged parent or old, widowed kinswoman of the husband's.

● 602 Patrilineal kinship relations are often related also to administrative considerations. On church-owned land, the peasants who live on the hillside below the church, who

●602 farm the land and use church pasturage in the valley, are often the sons of the brothers of the priest, if not his own sons--an Amhara form of nepotism.

417 231 Each hamlet is usually fenced in ("jägol"-thorny fence) against night-roving hyenas, and may contain, besides living huts and store huts, a cattle corral ("magwa") though at least the calves and the family mule are taken into the living hut at night. The kitchen garden may also have an enclosure of cut thornbushes, protection against ravages by domestic cattle; and ther usually is at least one fierce reddish-brown dog (with white underside). Solid fences of stakes fixed straight in the ground ("gäräggärä") are usually used only around churches.

632 622 While the head of each hamlet is the head of the residential, extended family, the administrative head of a series of hamlets is appointed by the governor of the province (formerly by the feudal lord). This appointed headman, chega shum (lit. "appointed one over the soil") may administer as few as two hamlets, or as many as fifty, with the mode about 8 to 10. In sparsely populated, less fertile or very mountainous territory his domain may be greater, but in most cases his area is within sight so that he can even maintain contact during the rainy season. His area is properly called "mändär" and constitutes the nearest approach to the village concept. If his territory is on church land, it is referred to as "and debber agär" (lit. land in support of a certain holy place) since very often this land has been donated for that purpose in the last will of a pious elderly landowner, and is something like parish

423 The richest farmer in the rural vicinity of Gondar,
427 a member of the Qemant (Cushitic-speaking) ethnic group, owns 8 gasha (about 400 acres), which is considered fabulous wealth by his Amhara neighbors. However, with the aid of his sons and servants, he cultivates only one gasha at any given time. He parcels out the remaining 7 gasha, except for some fallow land, to landless tenant farmers, many of them ex-slaves, usually in plots no bigger than 10 qada (about 4 acres), which is considered the limit one man can plow and seed without help. The rent they pay him consists of one "madiga " of tyeff grain (about 25 kilo); payable by each. Each also pays him 1/2 madiga of barley, referred to as "qolo", tribute to his "household". His agents also collect the 10% tithe, in produce, which he is expected to pass on to the government, and the new Eth$4.- education tax. He invest part of his profits in cows for his increasing herds.

423 For purposes of taxation, of peasants, the govern-
651 ment treasury must rely on the judgment of the headman, ("cheqa shum"), who is difficult to check because the land is unmeasured and a "gasha" is a flexible concept. Therefore, his supervisor, usually the mislane, can only base a check on past, customary payments.

•[602] Taxcollectors are known to be generous when deal-
423 ing with even distant kinfolk, or with priests and
651 their relatives, and to even out the receipts by pres-
653 sure on low-class ethnic minorities, justifying this by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income from their handicrafts.

7. Family and Kinship in Social Organization.

602 The emphasis on the extended family and kin relations among the Amhara can hardly be exagerated. In all problems of life the Amhara first turns to family and kin. While the partilineal-patrilocal extended family is considered of first importance, consanguinal kinfolk on themother's side rank only slightly less in obligation and duties owed by the individual, and in benefits for which he can appeal. In contrast, affinal relationships are regarded as considerably less important [428] in obligations and benefits,. This attitude is reinforced by the traditional law which emphasized inheritance [589] in consanguineal relationships, even distant ones, over closer affinal relatives; and by the relatively easy divorce from the common "semanya" marriage.

602 539 Proverbs emphasizing various aspects of kin relations abound and are constantly cited as advice in problems, and in "socializing " and "enculturating" the young:

"The liar to win over,
to his brother and sister appeal",

(i.e., do not appeal to the judge, whom the liar may fool; but to his siblings, whom he cannot fool).

"Quarrels within the kinfolk,
(are like) insects on cabbage",

(i.e. they do not strike at the root, are not really destructive).

"Relatives and medicine,
in days of trouble seek them."

602
539 "When kinfolk aid each other,
no trouble can sever them".

"The needle does not see her own hole
yet it serves her so well",

(said of a man, who, as is common, is generous to his brothers and sisters, yet stingy to his wife and even children).

"When the nose is hit,
the eye begins to weep",

(i.e when one rehtive is hurt, the others suffer with him).

602 Kin relations give the individual his greatest source of security, psychological and economic, to the Amhara mind, and protect him from the world outside.
[574] Therefore, regular and frequent visiting of kinfolk is emphasized; it is one of the most frequent causes of absentiism of Amhara employees. Events of the life cycle (marriages, memorial feasts, etc.) require such visiting. The end of the rainy season is another stimulus. No other association seriously challenges the predominance of kin relations in Amhara society.

A. The Extended Family and Kinship Terms.

596 The extended patrilocal, patrilineal family usually inhabits its own hamlet, farms its own land, allocating it to its biological-nuclear families. Patriarchal elders form an informal council that can be convened in any case of need. This extended family is most typically found among owners of "rest" land

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562 The commoner woman may not
565 carry a "chera" flyswitch of monkey-hair or horse-
293 hair, otherwise she will be criticized as "rudely presumptuous" and "proud". Commoner women therefore drape the shamma over their heads to be somewhat protected from flies, or cut a small branch off a eucalyptus tree. Noblewomen may carry a chera, and indicate by their heavy weight that they have a houseful of servants to perform every menial task.

562 With advancing age, past menopause, the social
888 position of the commoner woman steadily improves. She now lords it over the younger women in the household who have taken over the menial tasks. If she has remained married to the same husband for a number of years, she is respectfully addressed as "emmā bēt" (lit. mother of the house). If she is widowed, she gains prestige by taking vows as a nun. A woman who marries a priest shares some of the social dignity of his position; she is referred to as "qesenna" (from "qēs", priest). Women listening to the church service have the privilege of gaining merit by shouting the shrill joyshout "ellel" at the proper times in the liturgy.

562 Kinship ties remain a strong protection to
602 women even after marriage and residence away from the parental hamlet. She is often reminded not to forget her kinship ties when she marries:

562 "The killer? (It was) your husband;
•602 The victim? (It was) your brother.
[539] Great is your pain,
never will it leave your house"
(said to a woman who promoted her husband's interests, e.g. in competition for a position with the feudal lord, over that of her brother).

562 Psychological inferiority is ascribed to all women, by Amhara men, regardless of social rank. Her weakness is regarded as biological, intellectual and moral. It is regarded as proverbial:

[98] "Vulgar Language" - "yäsyet qwanqwa" (lit. woman's language)
"Polite Language" - "yäwänd qwanqwa" (lit. man's language); modest, correct, pure, elegant language. Also called "yäwänd amarena" (lit. man's Amharic).

[195] "syeto" - insult to a talkative man. (lit. womanish
"syetē" - (lit. female) - said of timber or soil that is feeble, soft, of little resistance.

[539] "Woman and donkey
(must be trained) with a stick."

"Even if a woman has knowledge,
(only a) man knows how to hold on to it."

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588 rewards as agreed upon") practiced by the Shi'ites in particular.
171 (footnote 81). The Abyssinian Coptic "Fetha Nägäst" forbids concubinage; but the custom has long been widespread. "Damoz" is even recognised in the modern law of Emperor Haile Selassie.

551 Individual arrangements are freest in "damoz", also in "qurban"
585 though sometimes less so, and least in "semanya". But in all three forms of marriage, the wife retains her maiden name and does not assume that of her husband. Even Empress Menen continues her old name. Sometimes the husband's mother may try to symbolize her authority - or even affection - by giving a new name to her new daughter-in-law living in her hamlet, but the bride's kinfolk and
● [602] peers will continue to use her old name. This is another, unconscious, emphasis of kinship relations over affinal ones.

588 The "damoz" is not considered contradictory to monogamy, which may explain her respectability despite prohibition of concubinage in the "Fetha Nägäst" code. Religious persons will explain the paradox away by quoting from Genesis "be fruitful and multiply".

583 In rural districts there is sometimes found a 4th form of
184 marriage, which indeed is re-enacted in some wedding ceremonies of "semanya". This form is bride capture, especially found among families too poor to defray the expenses of a wedding and cows that must be given the "semanya" couple. To cover up the shame and the poverty, the bride is "captured" and "pursued", by pre-arranged collusion. While she ostensibly goes, alone, to fetch water or gather deadwood, the groom's "mize" appear suddenly, preferably on horseback, and carry her off into the bush, while she, though ex-

Footnote 81: Donaldson, D.M.: Temporary Marriage in Iran. Moslem World, 1936, pp. 358-364. Smith, W. Robertson: Kinship and Marriage in early Arabia, 1885.

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000 letting the audience become aware of this collusion. (footnote 93).

B. Interpersonal Etiquette and Relationships.

571 Interpersonal etiquette among the Amhara governs particularly
576 those relations that can be described as "secondary group", for relations
[602] within the "primary group" are governed largely by specific kinship or religious rules of behavior.

It is a rare case - and considered very sad - if a person has no kin, and must base most of his human relations on secondary- group affiliations. The latter relationship includes most prominently the "agär" (lit. country, i.e. home district). Sometimes this refers only to the immediate parish, sometimes to the "meketl worädä" sub-district; but if a person finds himself in another province he may include the entire district, "worädä"; though the concept of "agär" does not usually extend beyond this territory in any real meaning of secondary group. If a person has no kin to turn to for aid in legal trouble, or needs a "mas" guarantor to secure a job, he may seek out a man from his "agär". For this reason there is motivation to observe rules of etiquette particularly with individuals in the "agar" secondary group, such as visiting or inviting them, bring them "enqutatash" gifts and flowers (through children) at New Year and "Masqal" festivals, etc. Such gifts are not given to complete strangers from a more distant territory, who are called "bada" (slightly derogatory term, with connotation of "rustic").

576 Interpersonal etiquette within the secondary group may lead to
572 closer personal relations between two individuals, taking certain

Footnote 93 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Minstrel's Argot. Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1952, Vol. 72, No. 3 pp. 102-109

c) Visiting

574 Visiting kinfolk regularly, during the nine months of the dry
602 season, is a prime requirement. This includes, in this order of emphasis and frequency: patrilineal kin, matrilineal kin, affinal kin.

574 Visits to affinal kin are less frequent and more formal. When
606 visiting one's parents-in-law, usually twice during the dry season, the man is not supposed to come empty-handed, but should bring a sheep as a gift. He waits outside the in-law hamlet, just beyond the thornbush enclosure, and asks the children whether his father-in-law is at home. When the latter appears, the visitor enters and approaches the hut. He enters only upon invitation. There is no mother-in-law avoidance as such, but contact is reduced to a minimum, between son-in-law and mother-in-law, to achieve maximum privacy for both.

602 Flouting kinship obligation is regarded as a shameful deviation, indicating an evil character. Kinship relations represent much security for the individual, but also involve him in serious obligations, such as aiding kinsman in blood-feuds and reprisal-raids ("bäggal"). A person who wanders away from the kin hamlet, or from kin obligations, when his mood or irresponsibility carry him, is called "läqo" (after the soft reed that grows rapidly at the least rain, but drops when grown to maturity).

574 Visitors, particularly strangers, must observe certain taboos,
754 lest they be suspected of bringing the evil eye. They should not ask the number of children, nor praise their health or good looks aloud. This is considered dangerous, because the "buda" spirit is always on the lookout for fat, juicy children so that he can magically "drink
[[69]] their blood" and make them waste away. (Children are vulnerable to many communicable diseases).

574 When visiting the sick, the visitor, especially female visitors,
576 are expected to express their sympathy in unmistakeable tones. The

181 the emphasis on frequency and intensity of kin relations; the dichotomy between "rustic peasant" and "great man - noble" personality (the latter constituting a culture goal; Amhara concepts of government administration; religious fundamentalism and literalness; and last, healing of "spirit ailments" outside the officially dominant religion.

181 Attachment to the land is a major preoccupation of all Amhara:
423 Nobles and "gabbar" serfs, men and women, old and young, priest and
571 student, even of the townspeople. The complexity of land tenure (i.e. the varieties of "rest" and "gult" land) is closely connected with the social status of the residential kin group; the life cycle of the individual is largely determined by the land tenure of his family, beginning with the very kind of education he is likely to receive. By extension, a person's secondary social group consists largely of persons inhabiting or stemming from the same "agärew" (lit. my countryside), the sub-district where his family owns land or works on it.

181 Attachment to one's kin group is nearly as strong on the in-
602 dividual's maternal side as on the paternal. The greater emphasis
[591 on the latter is largely due to the predominantly patrilocal resi-
611] dence, and on patrilineal descent. Kin visiting is a primary social duty, on both the individual's paternal and maternal sides, with equal frequency and intensity. By extension, though with lesser frequency and intensity, visiting of affinal relatives, notably the wife's parents who nearly always live in another hamlet, is considered an important social duty.

Kin feuds often last for generations, particularly between land owning ("rest" tenure) kin groups. The fear of shaming ("harerät")

181 one's kin by doing manual labor, made necessary in some cases by
602 poverty, leads to outmigration from the district and often even from the province. Nepotism in obtaining good positions is the norm to such an extent that failure to act in this manner would be severely criticised by the traditional Amhara as the utmost in meanness. In fact, when an Amhara wants to make a particularly derogatory remark about another ethnic group, he says that they are mean to their own kin and quarrelsome within the kin group.

[476] Cooperation and mutual aid, teamwork in agriculture, hut building, etc., are largely centered on the residential kin unit, notably the patrilocal hamlet.

554 A major culture goal in Amhara society is the assumption of the status personality of the "great man - noble" ("telleq sew"), in contra-distinction to the rustic peasant ("balager"). However, this ambition is usually frustrated because social status is primarily inherited, along with "rest" land and the expectation of re-appointment to one's father's position and rank of nobility in the hierarchy. The door to advancement has traditionally been only through feudal warfare: loyal support of one's feudal lord was rewarded with "rest" land and higher rank. Even today a young nobleman must await formal promotion to his father's rank by the emperor, and this still contains an element of personal reward and punishment.

157 The personality of the rustic Amhara peasant is extroverted,
554 not burdened with the considerable self-restraint expected of the Amhara noble. The peasant is quick to express mirth, anger, and other emotions. He is not stodgy and slow in conversation like the proverbial peasant of Europe. In fact, because of the relative

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[3]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry, using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[4]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by hereditary right (*rïst*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

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impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society.

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market.

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods.

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes.

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chīqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chīqā shum*.

Traditionally the *chīqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chīqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chīqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life.

The district over which a *chīqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur-

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*565 156 157 man, as we shall see in more detail below, includes the quality of leaving others alone.

[579] This strong sense of self is confirmed and symbolized by two conspicuous *565 156 411 Amhara customs: carrying staves and going on trips. A staff, like a pipe, affirms the ego in two ways. As a piece of personal property right at hand, it stimulates a sense of pride of ownership; as something external yet confronting the person, it makes the ego more conscious of its bounded reality. Such sensations are daily experiences for the Amhara peasant, who is rarely separated from the staff in one form or other. When he leaves his homestead he normally carries the hard *dulā*, a potential weapon of defense that likewise affirms his ego by bolstering self-confidence in a dangerous world. He braces the *dulā* against his back as he treks along, or holds it against the [481] front of his shoulder like a rifle. Older men walk using it as a cane. A special kind of staff made of softer wood (*zang*) is carried by pious and elderly [481] men. Participants in devotional services lean on still another type of staff (*maqwāmiyā*) which is distributed in the church for that purpose.

Traveling is another custom which affirms the ego, at least when one *565 156 484 travels spontaneously and not in organized company. As the individual moves past various stimuli, his self-consciousness is heightened by the contrast between a persisting ego and a constantly changing environment. As a traveler par excellence—and a lone traveler, unless social rank requires the presence of retainers—the Amhara peasant frequently removes himself from familiar home settings and confronts an outside world. He loves to go on the road and will travel at the slightest provocation. For him a distance of two or three hours by foot is like the American's trip to the corner drugstore. Whether to visit relatives or pay respects after death, to go to market or to court, to get holy water at a distant church, or to look after land in a far away district, the Amhara peasant is on the move dozens of times each year, often for trips involving two or three days of travel.

*565 156 829 • 602 609 Because of the great emphasis on the self in Amhara experience and culture, one may for the moment say that the personal ego is the central object in the Amhara peasant's view of society. Exactly what might be meant by this statement and in what respects it needs qualification are questions that will be taken up in the concluding chapter. If it is so, certainly the next most prominent social object in his world is the circle of close ones, or *zamad*. *Zamad* refers in the first instance to consanguineal kin, and is distinguished from the category of those who are strangers, or *bā'ed*. This is perhaps the most important of all the sociological distinctions made by the Amhara: the former, *zamad*, are seen as entitled to the warmest hospitality, while toward *bā'ed* indifference and suspicion are appropriate responses.

*565 156 602 This does not mean that the kin group is a corporate entity whose interests and identity transcend that of the individual. On the contrary, the notion of

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zamad is highly subjective, and all constellations of ***zamad*** reflect the interests and affections of ego. For the quality of kinship can be attributed to persons who are not consanguineal relatives, and this is done without resorting to fictions of affiliation. The term ***wandam***, for example, meaning "brother," is simply applied to any male person of about the same age to whom one feels closely attached. The term ***zamad*** itself is applied to anyone to whom one feels a close personal tie—even to a mere fellow-countryman whom one happens to meet in a distant region. It is thus not taking too great a liberty to translate the term ***zamad*** as "close ones."

The primarily subjective nature of the circle of ***zamad*** derives not only from the fact that it includes friends as readily as actual blood relatives. Within the bounds of consanguinity, the composition of the kin group with which a person identifies fluctuates according to his current needs, particularly with respect to land use rights. As Allan Hoben has demonstrated, corporate descent groups are important among the Amhara in that rights to land use are allocated on the basis of hereditary claims possessed by such groups; but the fact that in this ambilineal descent system each individual may claim multiple active affiliations, and enjoys a relatively wide range of choice, means that the particular corporate descent group with which an individual affiliates in order to claim his rights varies according to what land is subject to disputation. He may claim land via his father, his mother, or his children (through their mothers' rights), and in each case may trace descent back to a variety of apical ancestors.[9]

The next most inclusive sociological concept beyond the ego-oriented circle of ***zamad*** is that of ***agar***, or "homeland."* The co-residents of one's ***agar***, like those who comprise one's circle of ***zamad***, are regarded as forming an important "in-group," outside of which all other persons are a priori rejected. Yet the Amharic concept of homeland, like that of kin, does not refer to a fixed social entity; its referent varies according to the context in which the individual chooses to use it. Thus, as we have seen, the concept of ***agar*** may be used to refer to one's parish, district, province, or even nation.

A more specialized dichotomy of some prominence in the outlook of the Amhara peasant hinges on variation in the altitude of homelands. Inhabitants of lowlands (***qolaññā***) and dwellers of higher regions (***dəgaññā***) tend to be conceived as polar cultural types. Different sets of habits and traits are attributed to them. Thus, according to one set of stereotypes, the ***qolaññā*** is viewed as a heavy drinker and hot tempered, while the ***dəgaññā*** is viewed as a heavy eater and inclined more to litigation than to violence. Again, the

* The less prominent category of ***awgan*** is intermediate between these two. ***Awgan*** has a primarily political connotation; it consists of one's consanguineal and affinal kin, friends and close retainers, all who may be mobilized in the event of political or military competition.

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leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*) rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obligations toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab*, a simple neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shameful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect toward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities.

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children.

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkār*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death.

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son.

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

shown by the vagueness of Amhara kin terminology. The term for brother, *wandam*, also applies to all the male relatives of one's generation and even to one's close friends. Similarly, the terms for uncle and aunt (*agot* and *akeste*) are sometimes used for nephew, niece, and cousin as well; and often these terms are simply replaced by the abstract generic word for kin, *zamad*.

The extent of reciprocal obligations among kin outside the nuclear family is a function primarily of the amount of spontaneous affection that exists among the individuals concerned and how close they happen to live to each other. Relatives on good terms with one another normally take turns visiting one another and eating together on holidays. They help one another in the event of sickness, death, fire, litigation, and murder. Orphaned or economically burdensome children are often farmed out to the households of more successful relatives.

These activities are based on voluntary reciprocity or good will. In its formal structure, the Amhara kinship system stresses the independence of the nuclear family. Although it occasionally happens that married brothers live in a single large compound under the moral authority of their father or an older brother, who is known as its *alaqā* and is responsible for the compound's payment of taxes, each nuclear family lives in separate quarters and produces and consumes its own supply of food by working its own separate acreage of land.

Within the nuclear family itself, the ties that bind are limited by certain fundamental safeguards of individual rights. One is the institution of private property. The land which each partner brings into a marriage or later acquires through bequests remains his own until death. If they should separate, each takes his own land, and the goods acquired by the household during their marriage are divided equally between them. There is also the provision of *gīl*, a quantity of property that either or both of the spouses may designate, prior to getting married, as strictly private property and indivisible in case of divorce. In the event that a nuclear family enters one of the modern savings associations or *equb* (to be discussed below), husband and wife join as separate members.

The possibility of divorce is another safeguard of individual rights within the nuclear family. Only in the *querbān* type of marriage is divorce forbidden. This form is normally restricted to priests and very devout, usually older, people; and even then divorces sometimes occur, the couple preferring the displeasure of the church to a life of continued antagonism. The standard sort of marriage is the *samānya* or contract form, in which the equivalent of a simple "I do" concludes the match and a simple "I do not" legitimates divorce. The divorce may be initiated by either husband or wife. An Amharic

wrapped tightly around the narrow end of the horn. The leaves are rolled to form an air tight funnel ending an inch or so beyond the end of the horn. Through this herbal funnel, the agamiy sucks blood up into the horn, seals the vacuum by gripping the funnel between his incisors, and, with his lips upon the leaves, senses when the blood has risen beyond the tip of the horn. As with the midwife, the agamiy's therapy is founded on his physical skills and is devoid of professional secrets and magical elements. Unlike the midwife, however, the agamiy learns his trade through an intimate apprenticeship with a cupper-kinsman.

The Tattooer. The tattooer (tokwariy) is generally a woman who performs both prophylactic and therapeutic tattoos, and although she also performs purely decorative works, aesthetic considerations are usually compounded with medical ones. The tokwariy uses either ink or a paste of carbon mixed with domestic oil; into this, the tattooer mixes whatever ground medicinals she considers appropriate to the ailment against which she is working. The tattooer rarely collects the medicaments herself. The tokwariy utilizes the services of a full-time medhaniyt korac (medicine gatherer) of the market place, for medicaments used in a wide variety of recipes (such as the sebat kelems, the "seven colors", used by the tattooer for ayni tila and yibuda basiyta). She pur-

*278 *759 peutic effectiveness. The uniformity of the chirurgeons' healing powers can be traced to the fact that their operations are relatively simple and easily learned. [602] A man begins his apprenticeship while still a youth, under the tutledge of a senior kinsman. Generally, he does not assume professional status until his mentor has died or retired, or until he has moved beyond the natal parish and out of the range of possible competition with his healer-kinsman. In either event, the apprenticeship is lengthy enough to ensure technical mastery, within the limits set by the healer's natural abilities. [752] The tagañ (bonesetter) is an exception, since his operations are by no means simple, and his natural skills more significantly affect his success as a therapist. Thus, there are more considerable differences in healing powers among tagañs than among other chirurgeons.

Second among these differences setting chirurgeon apart from herbalist are the criteria which healers each employ to decide whether a specific disease episode is appropriate to his therapy. The medical domain of a chirurgeon can be defined exclusively according to symptomatic criteria, grouped into unambiguous syndromes. *278 *767 *759 Therapeutic failure can usually be explained only in terms of the chirurgeon's lack of competence. For the herbalist, symptomatic criteria, by themselves, are ambiguous. The symptomatic definition of each herbalist

*753 *756 all are indicative of serious ailments. In a typical episode involving this syndrome, the sickman initially diagnoses the least worrisome etiology, likift or gerifta. Secular therapies are then obtained, but when these fail, a choice must be made from among the remaining etiologies.

The sickman usually finds epidemiological indications sufficient to favor one of the three etiologies. [562] [602] Zars, for example, are known to prefer post-pubescent females (constituting over 80% of zar mounts), and individuals who are the primary relatives of recently deceased balazars. Once an individual has been mounted by a specific zar, the bond between human and zar is almost always permanent. Over the years of their association, the zar becomes familiar with the constant companions of the host, particularly her children. With the death of the balazar, the zar characteristically desires to mount someone whom he already knows well. This epidemiological evidence is confirmed by divination and often by the appearance of additional symptoms (usually swooning, sleeplessness, langour, and depression) which are associated with zar involvement.

*755 776 787 If diagnosis indicates kureyña, the sickman seeks therapy from the leader (awakiy balazar) of a coterie (hadra) of zar-possessed folk. At their initial meeting, the awakiy balazar is mounted by one of his zars, who at-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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*757 which is mainly responsible for the junior wosfat
*759 therapist to limit his therapy to simply providing the unprocessed medicaments.

*278 One of the remaining redundant pairs,
757 (Ikek:Kabiy:k:I) with (Ikek:Kabiy:k*:I) links two
869 brothers of Lemmariet, who obtained the therapy from a
• [602] member of their mother's natal ambilineage core. The remaining redundant therapies are all traced to a single individual, Asfow (now deceased):

Therapy notation	Asfow's link to herbalist
(Koruba:Seci/Ateci:i:I+)	FaFa, via Asfow's first Wi
(Koruba:Seci/Ateci:i:I)	MoFa, via Asfow's second Wi
(Koruba:Seci:i:I+)	SiHu, Si is Asfow's second Wi
(Koruba:Seci:i:I)	FaSiHu, Fa is preceeding entry

Only in a minority of cases is a professional therapy transmitted to two or more residents of a parish who may practice it in comeptition with one another. Asfow did this by transmitting his therapy to three individuals whose geneaological ties to one another proved remote enough to preclude the tacit agreement which might enable closer kinsmen to vest exclusive professional rights in a single individual. Asfow's actions can be traced to two considerations. First, this therapy has low commercial value; it has a poor reputation for effectiveness, and it addresses an acute ailment, koruba (a fatal pox). Because a kuruba episode is character-

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two as talla sellers, and one each as mat seller, carpenter, day laborer, and pensioner.

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The practice of herbalist therapies in ward and town contrasts significantly with the situation in rural hamlet and parish. The relatively dense population of the town has important consequences. In the countryside, the closest herbalist needed for a specific episode may be a day's walk from the client's home; in the town several may be found within an hour's walk. The increase in herbalist therapies is not directly proportional to the increased population of town over countryside, however.

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In Gabrael sebeka, for example, only eighteen households (41% of the total) contain one or more herbalists. Many townfolk are forced to abstain from practicing herbalist therapies, because, as out-landers, they are unable or disinclined to locate needed botanicals. Also, significant numbers of townsfolk practice non-secular therapies, particularly as balazars.

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Further, although there are more redundant herbalist therapies potentially available to the townsman, he remains ignorant of many of them. The peasant locates himself within a network of several core kinsmen and neighbors upon whom he depends for information regarding herbalist chains. The townsman finds his place in a social matrix in which kinship ties are greatly diluted by distance.

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In Gabrael sebeka, for example, thirty-two house-

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632 holds (73% of the total) are without kinship ties to any other of the ward's households. Although many of these residents have kinsmen in other parts of Gondar, few have more than one or two relatives in the town.

[613] In addition, because most townfolk rely upon non-
[423] agricultural employment for their subsistence needs,
[241] there is a concomitant disinterest in ambilineage fields. A consequence is a weakening of the important economic bonds which otherwise link kinsmen to one another.

*278 Kinship ties are an important means by which the
*759 peasant acquires and communicates information necessary
203 for constructing herbalist chains. Since almost every
602 herbalist therapy of the rural parish enjoys its own
369 "pedigree", or trans-generational reputation, the peasant
613 herbalist is provided with means for 1) publicly validating his therapeutic claims, and 2) communicating the existence of the therapy to his potential clients. Potential clients frequently associate the ownership of a famous herbalist therapy with the members of a specific ambilineage, often identifiable by name. Both the ambilineage (whose identity is linked to its fields) and its medical reputation (which is tied to the ambilineage) are attached to a particular location. Since residence is most often viripatrilocal, the transmission of such therapeutic reputations is characterized by an
*278 agnatic bias. The male therapist moving to town, like
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Literacy, per se, is not the goal of enrollment, but is perceived rather as a pre-requisite for studying the Gospels (wangel), the psalter (daviyt), and a variety of prayers, pursuant to participating in the Mass (kidasiy) as an ecclesiastic of the parish.

Within a parish, only a minority of households send boys to the church school; these are generally ristenna households, each sending a single priest-candidate in any one generation. Because attendance at the school precludes shepherding, the common lot of young boys, the student's family must find a substitute shepherd for him; a younger sibling is usually available for this task, but, if not, a collateral or even non-kinsman may be obtained. Indeed, the age at which a boy begins his studies (generally, between seven and thirteen years) is often determined by when this substitute can be found. The parish school is suspended, however, during periods of intensive agricultural activities, of harvesting, threshing, and winnowing.

Although considerations of piety influence a man to seek ordination for his son, self-interest generally dominates. The achievement of priesthood validates a family's claims to church lands (yimoskol mariet). If the neophyte's father is himself a priest, his son's ordination means freedom from bothersome performances in the Mass. If the father is not a priest, but anyway